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ABSTRACT

This monograph addresses the way parents of minority students perceive the special education system, with specific attention to these parents' views of the process by which their children are designated as "handicapped." Chapter 1 discusses the Department of Education's racial classification system. Chapter 2 summarizes what is known about the general cultural ethos of minority groups and their concepts of disability. Chapter 3 summarizes the research on special education placement among minorities. Chapter 4 outlines the literature regarding the experiences of minority families interacting with schools and the special education system. Chapters 5 through 9 use the findings of a study of Puerto Rican American parents' view to illustrate the misunderstanding and inappropriate educational practice that can result when processes deny power to parents. These chapters discuss the following topics: (1) background and methodology; (2) description of the 12 participating families; (3) parents' theories of their children' problems; (4) problems of communication; and (5) legal compliance versus culturally responsive practice. Chapter 10 concludes that the findings of this study corroborate what is known about dissonance between school systems and minority families. An epilogue presents the findings of a series of follow-up interviews. Included are 348 references. (JB)

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